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**The groans of the
gallows**

London

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THE
GROANS OF THE GALLOWS,
OR THE
LIVES AND EXPLOITS OF
WILLIAM CALCRAFT
AND
NATHANIEL HOWARD,
THE LIVING
RIVAL HANGMEN OF LONDON & YORK.

THE BEST ACCOUNT OF
CALCRAFT'S LAST TRAGEDY, THE EXECUTION OF WILLIAM BOUSFIELD; AND THE LET-
TER THREATENING TO SHOOT HIM; ALSO, LONG TOM COFFIN, THE GRAVE-DIGGER
OF ST. CLEMENTS, CALCRAFT'S HEIR-APPARENT, AND CANDIDATE FOR HIS OFFICE.



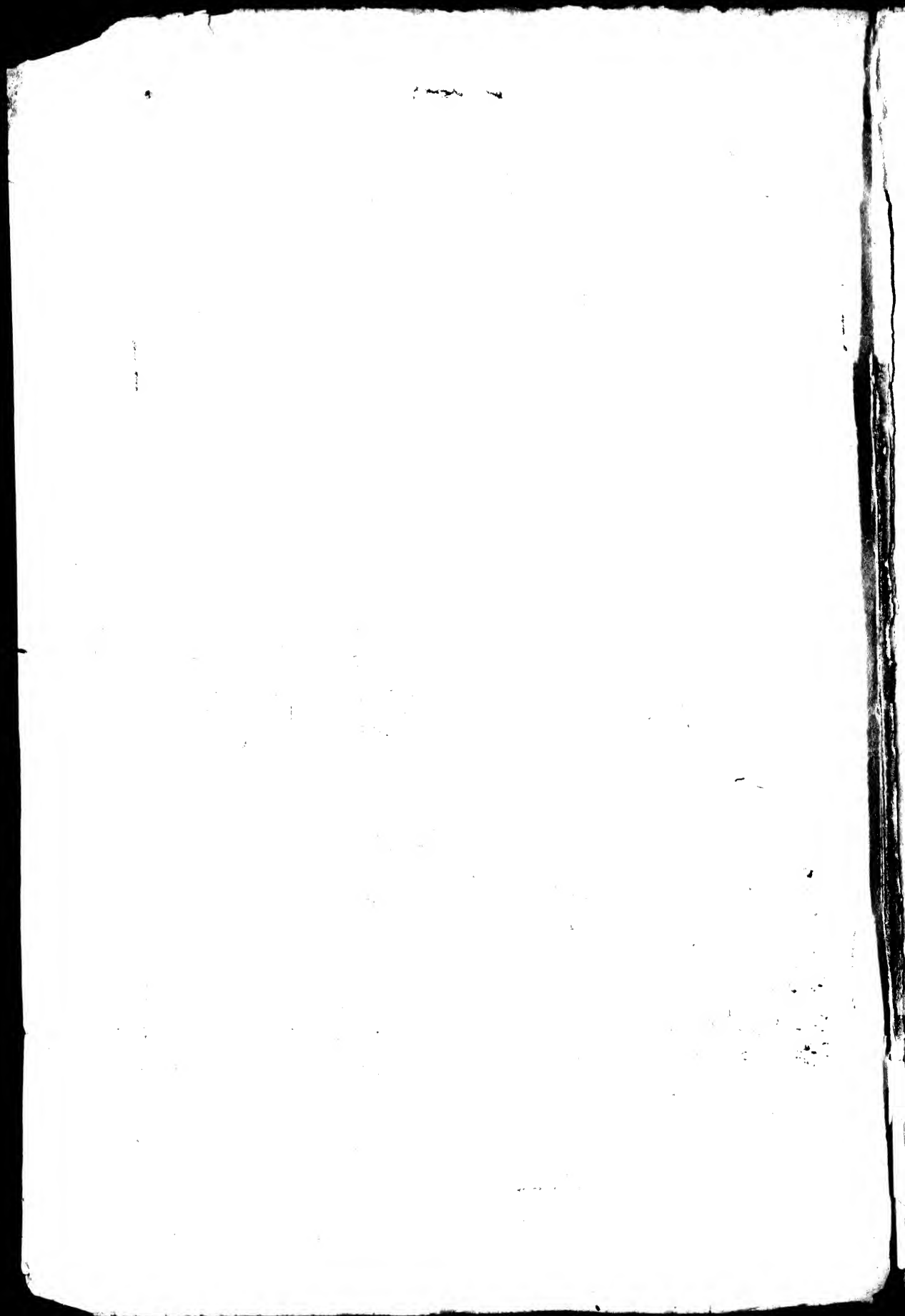
NATHANIEL HOWARD.

WILLIAM CALCRAFT.

MONS. JAUQUES.

A DESCRIPTION OF THAT EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER,
THE EXECUTIONER OF PARIS,
AND HIS CHAMBER OF HORRORS!!!

—♦♦♦—
LONDON:—O. ELLIOT, 2 AND 3, SHOE LANE, FLEET STREET.
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GROA

THE
GROANS OF THE GALLOWS.

"I am the Hangman, privileged to kill by law—one of those remarkable public characters employed to strangle my fellow-creatures for the sake of example. I obey the gory mandate of a barbarous criminal code, without the power to inquire whether those who suffer by my hands are guilty or innocent, sane or insane, or how they became felons.

"For a small sum I am compelled to commit a great crime; to imbrue my hands in human blood; and after I have done society this piece of service, strictly according to the letter of my instructions, neatly and expeditiously, many of those who boast of being devout lovers of justice and meek Christians, seem to shrink from me, as if my breath was pestiferous; the very touch of my hand contaminating; and my person from head to foot as something that should be loathed and execrated. Ah, ah! Refined justice—noble example, truly! The last madman (Buranelli) that I was commissioned to hang up like a dog for a multitude of ignorant and cruelly disposed persons to gloat upon, in defiance of the overwhelming evidence of the best medical judges of insanity, for having revenged himself upon his victim, Society, made up of individuals not one of whom, from the Sovereign to the pickpocket, can tell where the reason of any individual ends, and madness under its multifarious, subtle, and deceptive forms, commences—then revenges itself through me, its sworn deputy; and the filthy dregs, the scum, the sweepings of close alleys and dirty dark lanes (murderers in embryo), because, conscience stricken, my hand trembles and the fatal noose is not so scientifically tied as hitherto, and therefore the death throes of the poor wretch are rendered more agonising—they in turn avenge themselves upon me, and mix the music of their groans—groans from 5,000 hoarse throats—with the choking rattles of the dying, which my most polite and obsequious bowing does not allay, but infuriates into a horrid din. Yells as if from demons, mixed with curses, ascend louder and louder into the air, until even I, a coarse professional strangler, grown grey

in the business of slaughtering human beings, become ashamed, and am compelled to hastily retreat from the platform of this sickening National Exhibition, bitterly lamenting the doom I was born to, of being the servant of such masters. Yes, everywhere I go I find I am the most despised of men; despised, too, by those who strongly oppose the discontinuance of the gallows."

Sentiments like these would occur to the mind of a reflecting being, if it were possible to suppose one existed, doomed to perform the disgusting office of executioner. When once a man is fated to follow so horrible a calling, everywhere, even to the very threshold of his abode, he is hunted about like some hateful reptile, bearing on his head the brand of Cain, without the mark that protected him. It is little consolation to him that the law legalizes and society sanctions his proceedings, when he is abhorred by both high and low. Let him, thus reduced to seek the company of those among the lowest orders who would deign to associate with him, go to the public-house and indulge in the various gambling pursuits usually carried on in those places, vain would be his hope to drown all remembrance of the gallows and its dangling corpses. The softest whisper falls upon his ear like an electric shock, and induces him to fly from the presence of his fellow-creatures, as though the spirits of all the criminals that died by his hands had come to haunt him. As a proof of this feeling in William Calcraft, we will here inform the reader of a very recent circumstance.

At the corner of Devizes-street, Hoxton, is the "Tiger" public-house, famed for being his chief place of resort, for playing at skittles, &c., and meeting a number of associates and rabbit-fanciers, among whom he was held in great repute as a famous breeder of the choicest kind. Many violent scenes have there occurred, when amidst their inebriety they have wantonly insulted Calcraft, and jeeringly alluded to his calling. Near to the above house is a shop where he used to purchase oats for his rabbits, the proprietor of which, having for the first time deviated inadvertently from his usual reserve, and in the most gentle manner asked how the last man he hung bore his fate, our ill-starred hero at once flew from his presence, speedily sold off all his fine stock of prize rabbits, and to avoid any more such allusions on a similar errand, never went near the inquisitive tradesman again.

Society owes to him its pity, not its contempt, for the ful situation it places him in among his fellow-men, by its

barbarous institution of public executions. It punishes not him alone, but a fine family of which he is the parent. As an illustration of this fact it has been related to us, on good authority, that a young mechanic who courted one of his daughters, ignorant of her family at the time, had an invitation to meet her and partake of supper at a friend's house. The appointed night came, and the young woman with a goodly number of friends of both sexes, were assembled, anxiously waiting the arrival of her lover. At length he was announced, and on entering the room was joyfully saluted by his sweetheart and the rest of the company, who welcomed him to the seat of honour at the supper-table. All around were smiling happy faces, and now love-jokes were bandied from one to the other as the smoking viands were set before them. The young lover made himself at home, and vowed he was the happiest of the happy. Each guest showed the politest attention to his neighbour, and the host bid the stranger help himself to the best of the feast. Everyone was served, and about to eat and drink right merrily; when, hark! footsteps are heard on the stairs; the door, already half open, shows approaching from the dark landing the figure of a stout man, of the middle height, with remarkably determined-looking features, rather pock-marked, fair hair, and peering, bluish grey eyes, who on approaching the light is announced by his name, and saluted "Father!" by the young woman sitting beside the invited stranger, whose features now assumed a corpse-like paleness, as the startling fact suddenly flashed across his dizzy brain, that he had been courting the Hangman's daughter; that he was going to sit at the same table with him, eat off the same joint, drink out of the same glass, and perhaps be asked to shake hands with him! It was horror to him! He trembled in every limb; was speechless; became seized with sickness and bowel complaint. At last, summoning all his rapidly failing strength into one super-human effort, ere he fell, with one sudden bound he ineffectually tried to jump over the table towards the door, and overturning in all directions the dainty repast, escaped down stairs. The force of prejudice had made the sight of the Hangman to this young man like a frightful apparition.

What a fearful subject! The groans of the gallows, the dying moans of the condemned, become but so many instruments of torture to the servant of the law, without any appearance of decay in the source which supplies him with victims. What is the reason of this? Because the entirely un-

taught of the labouring classes forms an immense proportion, whilst the taught receive so imperfect an education, blended with corruption, that the greater half ought to be classed with the uninstructed.

Startling as it may appear, it is a solemn truth—the gallows, that was first founded in ignorance, is now supported by the abuses engendered in our Lancasterian charity school system. A vast number of poor children are promiscuously taken from various districts, and, without regard to their being virtuous or vicious, are formed into what are termed classes. The good and the bad, whose habits show more or less the moral and physical circumstances of their parents, are thus congregated in a mass, without that careful supervision which should be exercised by an adult being appointed to preside over them. The arts and sciences are to the children of the poor a dead letter. And then what shall we say of the monster evil, making the tiny fingers of the poor charity girls to compete with the ill-paid labour of their overworked and famishing mothers, under the pretence of teaching them plain needle work? That such is the case in many schools we are in a condition to prove.

Poor unfortunate wretches! Your parents impoverished, yourselves corrupted, and then strangled! Hitherto, if a child has been honestly disposed, he has been left to endure the sharp pangs of hunger, and wander in his filth half naked; exposed to the pitiless blast, without any institution opening its gates voluntarily to relieve him. But if urged on by want he proceeded to cast off his unprofitable honesty, and turn a thief, he was then taken first to a prison (to him like a palace), and afterwards to some refuge, *which refuses admission to starving wretches who have not so qualified themselves*, where he is at once comfortably housed, clothed, and instructed. Oh! wise and happy England! so economical with the virtue and honesty of your people!

Let us now look at William Calcraft in his earliest days. He was born about the year 1801, of humble, but industrious parents, at a country village a few miles out of London. His infant ears often listened to the children belonging to the Sunday school of his native place, singing the well known words of Dr. Watts's beautiful hymn—

“When'er I take my walks abroad,
How many poor I see.”

But alas! he never had the opportunity of going to that school, to be taught how to shun “the broad way leading to destruction.” His father, who might have brought him up

"in the way he should go," was snatched from him ere his mother or himself could provide against adversity.

To seek a chance fortune he travelled up to London, where his ignorance and forlorn condition shortly enabled that fell-demon which ever haunts the footsteps of the wretched, to mark him for her own.

For the sake of the contrast—to show how the materials of which a child is composed may be fashioned to the form of beauty or ugliness, according as he is surrounded by virtuous or vicious influences, we shall lay before the reader *The Diary of a Noted Murderer*, which pictures the sentiments imbibed by those unfortunate outcasts, and the effects of our present mode of punishment being to make them greater criminals than ever:—

Never mind; we can't help it. This is my history. I am the son of a worthy prig; it was a great pity that Jack Ketch did one day undertake to supply him with a hempen neckcloth—in those times the tree flourished by the grace of God! When I was six years old, I had neither father nor mother, so I turned romany, and used to dance and turn over head and heels along the public roads, to amuse the swells that passed in their carriages. In winter time I went about with my naked feet in the snow, and played chin-chopper with my mawleys, which were as red as blood. I was always togged in rags, and thus picked up many a brown.

When I was nine years old, I began to make use of my mawleys in another way—dipped them into the swells' gropusses. I used to knap fogles, and anything that came in my way. In another year I turned a regular dummy-hunter, and was soon joined by a number of pals.

When I was seventeen I turned cracksman, and broke into a crib to do a pannie. I was taken and was sent to the floating academy. The hulks are by no means a cosie prison. I slept on the hard boards, drank fresh water, eat black bread, and dragged about a cursed wooden ball tied to my feet, which did no good. I was exposed to the blows of the overseer, and to the heat of a raging sun. Then they cut off all my hair—such nib-like chesnut hair! Never mind. I stayed my time (fifteen years), that was a devil of a pull upon a man's life. I was 32 when I was let loose again.

He then states that he had given to him a little money he had saved, and a pass, printed on yellow paper, with large letters on the top stating that he was a "Freed Convict," which he was bound to show wherever he went, the consequences of which he next represents:

What an excellent recommendation, a galley slave! I was an object of fear to all who met me, and the little children used to run away from me whenever they saw me. All doors were shut against me; not a soul would give me any work. I spent all

my money, and I was still compelled to eat and drink. I showed my willingness to work, but could get no employment. What could I do? One day I was hungry; I thrust my hand into the window of a baker's shop and took a loaf of bread. The baker took me! I did not eat the loaf, but I was sent to the hulks for life, with three letters burnt into my arm with a red-hot iron. I'll show you the marks if you like. That act of justice was done, in consequence of what they call my Relapse!

The poor victim of that "barbarous step-mother, society," then gives an account of his being sentenced to be transported for life. In consequence of the cruelties of which, and the indignation he naturally felt at being prevented from getting an honest livelihood, he makes his escape; and rapidly mounts the ladder of crime, until he has reached the last step, from whence there is no turning back to avoid the abyss of eternity.

I could not stand it, so I determined to escape. To escape, I had only three walls to pierce through, and two chains to cut; and I had a nail. I did escape. I met with some pals, who had either served their time or cut their lucky also. This time that I escaped, I had no yellow passport it is true, but I had no money either. The chief of those pals proposed to me to become one of them; they employed themselves in sapping oaks upon the highway. I accepted the offer, and began my avocation of killing to live. Sometimes it was a diligence; sometimes a private chaise; sometimes a man on horseback only. The money was sacked, the beasts and the vehicles were left to their chance, and the men whom we killed were buried under a tree, taking care that their trotters didn't peep out, and then we cut a fling over the grave to prevent the earth from having the appearance of being lately disturbed.

I grew old in that way, sleeping in the fern, beneath the light of the stars, pursued from wood to wood, but free and my own master. Everything has an end, and that kind of game as well as anything else. The traps one night nailed us all. My pals, however, managed to give them the slip; but I, being the oldest of them all, remained in the hands of the thieves (*gen-d'armes*) with cocked hats. I was brought hither. I had already passed up every rail of the ladder except this one. My race has been a tolerably short one. What matter is it, however? I am now old and good for nothing.

The fatal hour at last arrives, and the "state-made criminal" is cut off unprepared to meet his Heavenly Judge, while cursing all around the blood-stained gibbet. *Ah! that horrible populace, with their hyena-like yells.*

SWEARING IN THE EXECUTIONER.

According to *The Historical Records of London*, the fright-

ful and awful ceremony of swearing into office the public Executioner, in ancient times, was as follows :—

In the council-chamber of Guildhall, when a vacancy had occurred by death or otherwise in the office of hangman, there used to assemble together with great pomp, dressed in their civic costume, scarlet robes, wigs and gowns, some holding in their hands their wands, others their respective batons of authority, the Recorder of London and his secretary, the Clerk of Arraignment, the Lord Mayor and his head clerk, the Sheriffs and the City Marshals, the Governors of Newgate and Horsemonger-lane Gaols, one of the Crown Judges, with the Town Crier, and officers of the peace.

After due proclamation, and some days had elapsed to permit of the receipt of applications, and the proper filling up of a list containing the Christian and surnames of the candidates, to which sometimes the names of noted criminals (guilty of any crimes except murder) would be admitted; then, at an appointed time after the dread hour of midnight, they would gather themselves together in secret conclave; the Crown and City Judges before-mentioned being seated at a bench, mounted high, covered with black cloth, and having dark caps on their heads, trimmed with red, underneath a large scroll inscribed with the words—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man also shall his blood be shed."

The Recorder proceeded in a solemn voice to announce that the "Court for the choosing in of an Executioner of Felons and Traitors was now sitting according to the laws and statutes of this realm; and that it was the pleasure of his most gracious Majesty the King to have chosen a fitting instrument for such lawful purposes, to hang, behead, draw and quarter the aforesaid felons and traitors when sentenced after conviction to die." "God save the King," to which all assembled responded "Amen." The Town Crier was then ordered to read the list of candidates, whose names were put into a box and shaken, when a name was drawn by each of the Sheriffs, at the same time a bell was heard solemnly tolling. The two names were afterwards given by the Judge of the City, that is to say, the Recorder, unto the judge representing the Crown; who, while they were held so as to prevent them being seen, drew one out of these two also by chance, and rising immediately, announced the name thus selected to the Court.

The proper keeper was next ordered to produce and lay on the table an axe, well sharpened, the same that is used for the beheading of traitors; and a pair of leg irons, handcuffs, and other fetters, a small coil of rope, and a pair of white caps; which having done, the doorkeeper was directed to introduce the individual whose name had been chosen, who was forthwith sworn, kneeling, after the following manner, with his right hand resting on a Bible, and his left on the edge of an axe; the Recorder all the time holding the sword of justice suspended over his head:—"I do swear to hang or behead, or to draw and quarter, or otherwise destroy all felons and enemies of the peace of our lord the King, and of his sub-

jects duly sentenced according to law, and that I will do the like unto father, mother, sister, or brother, and all other kindred whatsoever, without favour or hindrance. So help me God."

Thereupon a black veil is thrown over him at his rising, when he is conducted out of the court, amid the groanings of the assemblage, the tolling of the death-bell, and the horrifying words of the City Judge grating in his ears, "GET THEE HENCE, WRETCH."

The same bad social arrangements that creates victims for the gallows, compelled William Calcraft to become a hangman. As each day dawned, he was compelled to scheme for that day's existence. He had not then been taught the trade he has since learned, that of shoe-making, nor had he any friend to set before him a better way. To use the expressive words of Hugo, he was doomed like "one of those wretches whom we scarcely look at when they pass us in the street, to whom we never speak, and whose filthy contiguity we religiously avoid; one of those unfortunates who in their ragged infancy ran about with naked feet in the highways and streets, shivering with cold upon the quays, warming themselves by the steam that issues from the kitchens of the grand hotels at which we dine; dragging forth here and there a crust of bread from a heap of dirt, and wiping it ere it be eaten: fishing all day in the gutters to catch half-pence; having no other amusement than the gratuitous spectacles of a king's or queen's birth-day, and the executions on the Place de Greve, at Paris; or before the debtor's door at the Old Bailey, London; whose taste, if such as they have a taste for reading at all, leads them to prefer perusing the *Newgate Calendar*, or 'the last dying speeches and confessions' of murderers and accounts of their bloody exploits. Poor devils! whom hunger urges on to want, and want to do worse. Disinherited children of that barbarous step-mother, society; children whom the penitentiary prison receives at 12, and the scaffold perhaps at 40 (if they should not be doomed to be cut off sooner); luckless creatures, whom with a workshop or a school we might have rendered worthy members of society, moral and useful; and of whom we know not how to dispose, otherwise than by sending them to the ant-hill of Toulon, or to the silent cemetery at Clamart (where criminals are interred in France); or burying them under the floor of Newgate; thus depriving them of life after having deprived them of liberty—yes, by taking that which God alone gave, and therefore possesses only the right to dispose of, when it is His divine will to summon a soul into the presence of his immortal Majesty."

In course of time Calcraft got initiated into all the mysteries of the hanging profession; but though there are circumstances

connected with his then career involved in some obscurity, we can positively assert, that the common rumour respecting his having been convicted of felony, and that he afterwards received a pardon on condition of his becoming a hangman, is *not founded on fact.*

It is but a strict act of justice due to Calcraft from us here to state this truth. We have shown that whatever vices have belonged to him, were not originally created by himself; while the fact of his undertaking to learn the trade of a shoe-maker, and of his own accord endeavouring to shake off his companions to get his living in a better manner, proves that he only wanted to be surrounded by favourable circumstances, when without doubt he would have made what the world calls a "bright man."

Messrs. Read and Company, the great porter brewers, in Liqueurpond-street, Gray's Inn-lane, about the same period took him into their employ as a private watchman; and he might to this day have continued there or followed some more advantageous employment, had not his unlucky genius still haunted him.

Instead of going down the horses' throats,
There disappear'd somehow a peck of oats.

Rightfully or wrongfully, our watchman was compelled to eave, and as—

"Great events from little causes spring,"

He was led to become our executioner. He by some means or other became acquainted with Old Tom Cheshire, the late executioner, who induced him to accept the office of deputy-hangman. When Old Tom died, Calcraft succeeded to the post of chief executioner, and intended to follow the custom of appointing an assistant to himself, but was overruled by his employers, the sheriffs, in consequence of a *ja. nq off of orders in the hanging line*, through the abolition of that mode of punishment for robbery and forgery. He is therefore now left alone to enjoy the unenvied glory of strangling the victims of misfortune; no one wishing to be seen in the business, except the Gaol Parson, who is so expert at giving the signal for stretching the necks of his fellow-sinners. And many are the young pupils who attend regularly at the foot of the gallows to take lessons from him; not forgetting in the buoyancy of their youthful spirits to pass a few jokes, while they are anon praising the calm resignation on the noble bearing of the culprit, and the cool science displayed by both Parson and Hangman. Calcraft's age is about 54. The reward that he receives for exhibiting his skill in the art of driving immortal souls into

eternity, amounts to 21s. weekly, paid by the authorities of the City of London and Middlesex, and £5 quarterly, contributed by those of the county of Surrey, for executions done at Horse-monger-lane Gaol. He also appropriates whatever property is found on the persons of those he executes, including the clothes they suffer in, unless when specially ordered in accordance with the dying wish of a favoured criminal to be given to surviving friends. He may now almost be termed the Executioner of England, for there is scarcely an execution in any part but it is performed by him; for which he is paid extra, according to the distance; unless his famed rival, Nathaniel Howard, the Hangman of York Castle, should get the start of him, and successfully compete for the job. It is his office also to flog with the *blood-red cat*.

Calcraft, in the early days of his career, cultivated a good crop of hemp in his garden, and so remarkable it became, of which he seemed proud and often boasted, that the Sunday morning stragglers used to go to view it in hundreds. He, and his rival Nat, have realised many pounds by the sale of criminals' apparel to exhibitors of wax figures; amongst the most famous of them being Madame Tussaud, who contrives to draw thousands of sight-seers to view the exact likenesses of those criminals with their real clothes on. As profitable have proved the sale of the various ropes which strangled the criminals, the hangman's tariff of prices rising from 5s. to £1 per inch, according to the notoriety of a criminal, the circumstances of purchasers, and the pressure of demand for a piece of the curiosity. Such is the depraved state of many persons, of even boasted respectability of station and refinement.

Nat Howard is a different kind of being to Calcraft; much younger, of stronger frame, with a cunning, fox-like countenance; and the phrenological development of his contracted brow would make any one suppose that nature cut him out for the profession he has chosen. No such sensitive feelings as we have shown Calcraft to possess actuates his breast; he is, in short, every inch a professional neck-stretcher.

The lives of both, however, have been cast in the same mould of neglect and misfortune, which under better auspices might have been as bright as their more fortunate fellow-men. We only care to notice them so far as to establish the grounds of our theme, the injustice of capital punishments in the persons of the hired executioners of the law; their inefficacy, as regards the criminals themselves; and the immorality they produce amongst the uneducated portion of the community.

Amongst other notable characters once excited by this bad system to the ambition of becoming Calcraft's or Howard's successor,

we may mention "Long Tom Coffin," the grave-digger of St. Clement's, a remarkably cadaverous-looking character, whose proverbial ignorance and earthy profession united, would well suit the hangman's disgusting office. Here it will be well to quote Douglas Jerrold's description of the demoralising scenes at a public execution—

The sky is as black as pitch, and the drizzling November rain seems to sink into our very flesh. All is coldness, dreariness, and desolation. We emerge from a bye lane into one of the broad highways of London (Holborn). What sudden animation! The road streams with passengers; boys and men, and women, some with infants at their breasts—pass lightly on, laughing, talking, as to a merry-making or a holiday. Surely some national festival is a foot. Nothing less could have stirred the people at such a season thus early from their beds; nothing less could impart to them such vivacity of motion, such laughter, such careless merriment.

A quarter of an hour, and we arrive at evidently the sought for place, for a crowd is already gathered; a crowd constantly increasing from half a dozen avenues. How the people pour in! What anxiety they manifest to see a sight! See, the gates open and rumbling heavily a massive platform (called the gallows) is drawn out.

"What a light-hearted race," thinks a Brahmin from India, who is standing by, but mistakes the object of the assemblage; and he smiles to see a British youth, in the exuberance of his hilarity, knock the hat of a companion over his eyes and nose, whilst another joyous, waggish-looking sprite, with hands as quick and light as fins, visits every pocket of the discomfited. And still the jest and quip are heard, although the hammers applied to the national platform ring jarringly upon the ear. He also philosophically watches the abstruse game of "heads and tails" unceremoniously played beside the platform.

Hark what peals of laughter; what stamping; what clapping of hands. The festive noise proceeds from the opposite inn, crammed with the richer merry-makers, some of whom have given much silver, nay, some pieces of gold, to the master of the dwelling that they may sit at the window, and see the distribution of the rewards.

He makes his way into a room upstairs, containing about fifty persons of both sexes; who, whether awake or asleep, are beastly drunk from drinking deeply of rum, gin, and beer, and the smoking of tobacco, the fumes of which obscure every object, while every description of the most disgusting ribaldry is going on around. He pays his price for admission, and has just taken his place amongst the throng at the window, when the cry of "the sheriffs are coming," causes a rush within, as amongst those without, and to his mortification he gets thrust aside, and well d—d in the bargain, if he ventures to remonstrate.

Hats off, down there, you in the white hat and crape—you in the butcher's mourning—bonnet him—silence! Yes, says the Brahmin, the ceremony is about to begin; the national games are

about to commence. He then inquired how many were that morning to be rewarded. He was answered,

"Vy, my cock, there's strings for six."

I was right, concludes the Brahmin—strings, with medals, no doubt. Here's the white wands, cry a dozen voices at the window, and the stranger is greatly interested by the impatient manner, the animated voices of the more fortunate beholders.

Oh, Lord, exclaims a woman, there's the parson. Admirable people, thinks the Brahmin, who so wisely associate the beauties of your most charitable creed with all your public rewards, with even your public holiday. One—two—Here's Jack. God bless him, how lovely he looks, drest as if for a wedding, sobs a woman.

And there's Tom—he sees me—he sees me. God be with you, Tom.

God will bless 'em all, cries another female, bursting into tears. The Brahmin, affected by the pleasing passion of the woman, wept; but they were the tears of pleasantness. God will bless them all, murmured he.

Vy, there's only four, cries a spectator, in a tone of disappointment.

There must be six, cries another, six was the number.

No; d—d if there's only four, exclaims a third.

The other two, thought the Brahmin, do not merit the reward.

He's shaking their hands; the Lord bless 'em. How Tom stands; like a rock; what pluck. Darling fellow; doesn't shake a finger.

He's gone below, cries a woman, her voice suddenly husky, and fixing her nails like a beast of prey in the arm of her companion. God bless 'em; God bless 'em. God, God, a jarring sound, a fall, a loud groan; a sounding of hate and horror from a thousand throats—now the shrieks and screams of women, and now the silence of the tomb.

Mike, cries a spectator, a pint of brandy, and 'bacco for ten; saying this, the man flings himself into a chair, and laughs like a demon. Our Brahmin, astonished at the scene, ventures to creep to the window. He looks at the work of the hangman, and stupefied with terror, he tumbles in a heap upon the floor. The landlord has the stranger put to bed! he sleeps, but is awakened by men singing in chorus below—

"Now I am cut off in the height of my prime,"

And, with the haggard countenance, writhing heart, heated brain, and perspiring brow of the principal actor in the horrid scene, William Calcraft, the hangman, now drunk, to stifle his inward torture and nerve him to the performance of the deed of blood, for which he is hired, sworn, and paid; thus he progresses amid the sickening groans of the sight-seers surrounding the gallows.

These horrible groans, yells, and screams from 5,000 throats, were again heard, mingled with the tolling of the "death-bell" of the prison, and the merry chimes of the adjacent churches, for the

restoration of peace, at the execution of William Bousfield, for the murder of his wife and three children, on Monday morning, March 31st. On the Saturday previous, after taking a last farewell of his sisters, it is recorded that the miserable wretch threw himself upon the fire to avoid by a more painful death the disgrace of hanging from the gallows. His neck and face got dreadfully burnt, and he would have succeeded in his object of self-destruction, but for the turnkey in attendance, who dragged him away. On the Sunday lotions were applied to ease his pain, and he presented a swollen and ghastly aspect.

When, at a quarter before eight on the Monday morning, the sheriffs and Calcraft attended to finish the sanguinary business, accompanied by the Governor, the Rev. Mr. Davies, the Chaplain, and a posse of turnkeys, *with a few favoured visitors of a respectable class to see the delectable sight!* the criminal was sitting on his bed vomiting, and with his head bent forward on his chest and foam running from his mouth, appeared as if already dying. Seeming unable to move, the hangman pinioned his arms as he sat on the bed, and four men carried him on to the fatal drop, while the *farce* of reading sonorously the funeral service was rehearsed by the jail parson, preceded by sheriffs Kennedy and Rose, *holding their black wands to complete the stage effect of this National Exhibition.* At the last scene of all, the culprit was accommodated with a high-backed chair, brought from the Governor's house; while Calcraft scientifically noosed the rope about his neck, after which he quickly flew below, drew the fatal bolt, and *ran away trembling, lest some one from the crowd should shoot him, according to a threatening letter he had received,* the contents of the letter informing him "that it would be the last execution he should perform, for he should that morning be certainly shot by one of the gang, who signed themselves the "KENT-STREET ROUGHS."

While the frightened hangman was hiding himself in the prison the murderer three several times contrived to jump up and rest his feet on the edge of the platform, and ease the pressure of the rope on his neck; all the time trying to raise his hands to grasp its upper part, and presenting the most awful contortions and writhings that was possible for a half-strangled wretch to exhibit on the gallows; thousands of men and boys in the meanwhile groaning, and women and girls screaming and fainting. Twice in vain did two strong men forcibly remove the feet of the criminal, and hold on to his legs; the third time, the hangman was sought for, and ordered to return and complete his duty.

At a meeting of the Court of Aldermen, on Tuesday, April 1st, this sad scene was discussed, when the sheriffs declared that they could no longer depend upon Calcraft's nerve to perform the diabolical office; so may the result of the inquiry they have instituted, be at least this small modicum of the reform long desired, the removal of the gallows outside of the city within the dark portals of some bye-way prison, where it is only fit to hide.

With the sketches given of the two principal executioners of

England, we will conclude by adding a brief notice of the Executioner of Paris, from Mons. Froissart's "History of Remarkable French Criminals:"—

The present servant of the guillotine is an extraordinary man of his kind. He has grown grey in his profession, keeps a neat, small house in the environs of the outer barriers of Paris, and has a wife as remarkable as himself, the solitary companion of the many lonesome hours he is compelled to spend in his secluded home—secluded, although in the vicinity of a dense population, because the business he is doomed to, shuts him out from the general intercourse of his fellow-creatures, so prejudiced are old and young against his contact. Yet he has associates occasionally in the persons of two surly-looking keepers of the Bicetre prison and that well-known priest who consoles and receives the dying confessions of the condemned. Often at the midnight hour they might be seen conversing together mysteriously (if any one had the courage to venture in) when all well disposed citizens are wrapt in repose.

The executioner is not an extraordinary man from his countenance, for it is unusually pleasing for men of his stamp, but from the singular arrangement of his private chamber—truly a Chamber of Horrors—with models of various machines of torture and execution by strangulation and decapitation, from the earliest times to the present, and portraits of the most sanguinary criminals, among them being conspicuous the profile of Dr. Guillotine. He possesses a lottery book of the numbers borne by the murderers he has executed, which he has duly chronicled in a curious tabular form, under the heads of lucky and unlucky numbers, and which he superstitiously consults by some secret mode of divination, and applies to the prognostication of his daily affairs. So whenever a lottery is started anywhere, if the results of his calculation forbodes a fortunate issue, he ventures his money; if the reverse, he refrains. He is truly a very extraordinary character, and when sitting alone in this solitary chamber, thus poring over his death calender, and surrounded by the ominous relics of his dreadful office, he looks too fearful for any but the strongest nerved to approach.

May the brighter day be not far distant, when the "Groans of the Gallows" shall be heard no more, and solitary confinement for life be deemed a more efficient protection to society, and a terror to evil-doers.

END.